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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2577

September 25, 1992

NET FARM INCOME -- The forecast for 1992 net farm income is \$42-\$47 billion. This compares to \$45 billion in 1991. Net cash income for 1992 is forecast at \$54-\$57 billion, compared with the \$58 billion currently estimated for 1991. Total direct government payments are forecast up 17 percent for 1992. They come from two major sources: around \$1 billion in disaster payments -- mostly for 1990 and 1991 crop losses -- and an additional \$100 million in CRP payments. Production expenses may increase only 2 percent from last year because input prices will be only slightly higher in 1992. Contact: Bob Dubman (202) 219-0809.

EXPORT-IMPORT OUTLOOK -- Fiscal year 1992 exports for U.S. agricultural products are forecast to reach \$41.5 billion, up \$4 billion from last year. Gains are forecast for both bulk and "high-value" products. U.S. agricultural imports for fiscal year 1992 are expected to total \$23.5 billion, a \$900 million increase over 1991. Gains are forecast in both competitive and noncompetitive products. With 1992 exports growing faster than imports, the U.S. agricultural trade surplus is expected to climb \$3.1 billion to \$18 billion. Contact: Stephen MacDonald (202) 219-0822.

EGG EEP -- Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan has announced a package of initiatives under the Export Enhancement Program to encourage the sales of 40 million dozen table eggs. "(The) announcement underscores our commitment to use EEP to expand U.S. exports of value added products," Madigan said. "In the past five years, 87 million dozen U.S. table eggs -- or \$50 million worth -- have been exported with the aid of EEP. The eggs exported under these two initiatives are estimated to have a market value of over \$25 million." Contact: Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623.

REDUCING EXPENSES -- For an expenditure of \$100, the typical southern poultry farmer could save \$9,000 annually on their electric bill. Scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service have devised a wind sensor that turns off fans when there is enough wind, two mph or more, to protect the birds from heat buildup. Currently, on hot summer days, many farmers run the fans constantly. The new device can cut the fan's running time by 50 percent. A typical poultry producer has four broiler houses and raises 160,000 chickens during the summer. If all southern poultry producers used the wind sensor shutoffs, savings could reach \$63 million a year. Contact: John D. Simmons (601) 323-2230.

HERE'S ANOTHER HEAT TRICK -- An old-time remedy, white paint, can lower roof temperatures. John Smith, an engineer with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, made temperature checks for three years on plain galvanized metal panels and on panels covered with white paint. Surface temperatures on the unpainted sheet metal ran 40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit higher than the painted panels. "We're suggesting that peanut warehouses be painted white as an inexpensive and effective way to reduce loss of kernel moisture caused by high temperatures," Smith says. Contact: John Smith (912) 995-4481.

NEW TRADE ACCORD WITH JAPAN -- Over the next three years the new package of trade concessions from Japan will add an estimated \$75 million to \$95 million in extra sales for U.S. farmers. "While the lion's share of this new growth will go to U.S. corn producers," Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan says, "significant export gains are also expected for various processed dairy products such as whey, dairy-based bakery goods, ice cream mixes, cheese food, and dietary supplements." The new accord builds upon a 1988 agreement that won improved access for 11 groups of processed agricultural products. Contact: Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623.

KEEPING THE RED IN -- A potential replacement for the food colorant Red Dye No. 3 has been developed. Currently Red Dye No. 3 is banned in cosmetics, externally applied drugs and some food dyes because it is a suspected carcinogen. But its use as a colorant for maraschino cherries and some other foods is still permitted under 1960s rules. Gerald Sapers of USDA's Agricultural Research Service says a new coloring process using carotenoid pigments, that can be derived from red peppers, pimentos and tomatoes, are currently approved for food use. The coloring process is compatible with current commercial production of colored cherries. Contact: Gerald Sapers (215) 233-6417.

HOW TO LOWER CHOLESTEROL -- High levels of cholesterol in the blood are associated with greater risk of heart disease and stroke. Lowering fat intake can help. A person needing 1,800 calories to maintain desirable weight needs no more than 60 grams of fat and 20 grams of saturated fat. Eating vegetables and fruits that contain vitamins C, E, and beta-carotene can help. These vitamins prevent damage to body cells and tissues. Eating cereals, grains, and beans provides fiber, which seems to have a protective effect against heart disease. "Don't forget exercise as part of a heart-healthy routine," says Beth Reames, Louisiana State University Extension Service nutritionist. "Exercise helps to reduce cholesterol levels...and is the most important predictor of long-term weight loss success." Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-4141.

COOL TEMPS BOOST MILK OUTPUT -- Unseasonably cool temperatures have delayed crop development in several sections of the nation this summer. But in some milk-producing areas milk output per cow has been above anticipated levels. It has helped to cause the 1991/92 milk production estimate to be increased 700 million pounds, and the 1992/93 projection to be increased 200 million pounds. Contact: James Miller (202) 219-0770.

INTEREST RATES AND FARM LOANS -- Will lower short-term interest rates affect the rates farmers pay? An examination was made of quarterly movements during 1977 through early 1991 in the three-month Treasury bill rate and interest rates paid by farmers. It showed that when three-month Treasury bill rates fell by one percentage point, rates to farmers fell less. Approximately 60-80 percent of the drop was passed through to farmers by banks. The study showed that it takes about 18 months for the rate change to be incorporated into farmer loans. Contact: Ronald Babula (202) 219-0785.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1842 -- In the first of two reports, Brenda Curtis reports from Florida about the impact on agriculture of Hurricane Andrew. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1324 -- Nutritional aid for mothers and children hit by Hurricane Andrew; poultry irradiation approved; the fall color preview; battling the medfly in California; hightech nutrition research. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1833 -- USDA News Highlights; update on U.S. wheat donations; U.S./Japan sign farm trade accord; Hurricane Andrew affects Florida farm workers; guayule research. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1539 -- Infants & energy; pregnancy & weight gain; infant growth faltering; model pigs; cholesterol, a nutrient? (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thur. Oct. 1, horticultural exports, trout production; Tues. Oct. 6, crop and weather update; Thur. Oct. 8, U.S. crop production, world ag supply and demand; Fri. Oct. 9, farm labor, world grain/ag situation, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation.

These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on crawfish farming research; Lynn Wyvill takes a look at a new U.S. crop called Annual Medics.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crops; Ron Engel on irradiation of poultry; USDA economist Barbara Claffey on the agricultural outlook.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on computerized sow feeding; Patrick O'Leary reports on a windbreak weed barrier; and Lynn Wyvill reports on parasitic worm immunity in cattle.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

SILK BALLING...is a concern for corn producers in Minnesota, says Bruce Lease (KLQL/KQAD, Luverne). Cool temperatures have helped to produce husks that are too tight for the silk to emerge. Bruce also says that producers who replanted to soybeans following the widespread hail storm last July have a crop that is further behind schedule due to cool weather. He says it'll be a race with the first killing frost whether the replanted crop will offer much of a yield.

RAIN STORM...in south central Iowa closed schools and businesses, and put many fields under water, says Lynn Watts (WOC, Davenport). 12 inches of rain was dumped on the area in less than 24 hours. Lynn says producers will get damage assistance. A storm moved north into southeast Minnesota where it dropped eight inches of rain and closed a 20-mile section of I-35 for several hours due to high water.

TRI-STATE DAIRY EXPO...in Decorah, IA was covered live by Von Ketelsen (KOEL, Oelwein, IA). The event served producers in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Von says youth attendance was up, and that the Expo provided a real morale boost to dairy farmers. Optimism was high.

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COLDEST SUMMER...in 80 years, says Doug Cooper (Iowa State Ag Extension Service, Ames). First frost in his area usually arrives October 7-10, but producers hope it will be in late October to allow further development of crops. Doug says he's been involved in producing six video tapes for use next year in the former nation of Czechoslovakia. The tapes show farmers how to adapt to a market economy, and how to use information in making planting and marketing decisions.

CONGRATULATIONS...to our Patrick O'Leary (USDA-TV) for winning the Gold Screen award of the National Association of Government Communicators. Pat's five-part series on farming in Iowa was selected as best TV documentary in 1992. The award will be presented at the association's annual convention in Washington, D.C. next January.

USDA OUTLOOK CONFERENCE...December 1-3, 1992. For registration info call (202) 720-3050.

Vic Powell

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio and TV Division